

EXHIBIT A

11058 U.S. PTO
06/25/01

PTO/SB/16 (8/96)

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Attorney Docket No. 004688.P071Z Type a plus sign (+) inside this box

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10979 U.S. PTO
60/301067
06/25/01

PROVISIONAL APPLICATION FOR PATENT COVER SHEET

This is a request for filing a PROVISIONAL APPLICATION FOR PATENT under 37 CFR 1.53 (c).

INVENTOR(S)/APPLICANT(S)

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	MIDDLE NAME/ INITIAL	RESIDENCE (CITY AND EITHER STATE OR FOREIGN COUNTRY)
Kikinis	Dan		Saratoga, California
Kamen	Yakov		Cupertino, California
Kimball	Brian		

TITLE OF THE INVENTION (280 characters max)

CUSTOMER SELF SERVICE IN INTERACTIVE TV ENVIRONMENT FOR TV PROGRAMMING PACKAGES

CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS (including country if not United States)

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ENCLOSED APPLICATION PARTS (check all that apply)

Specification Number of Pages 3 Small Entity Statement
 Drawing(s) Number of Sheets 4 Other (specify)

METHOD OF PAYMENT OF FILING FEES FOR THIS PROVISIONAL APPLICATION FOR PATENT (check one)

A check or money order is enclosed to cover the filing fees
 The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge filing fees and credit Deposit Account No. _____

Filing Fee Amount (\$) 75.00

This invention was made by an agency of the United States Government or under contract with an agency of the United States Government.

No
 Yes, the name of the U.S. Government Agency and the Government Contract Number are: _____

Respectfully submitted,

SIGNATURE 

DATE 6/25/01

TYPED or PRINTED NAME: John P. Ward

REGISTRATION NO. 40,216
(if appropriate)

Additional inventors are being named on separately numbered sheets attached hereto

60301067 062501

FEE TRANSMITTAL FOR FY 2001TOTAL AMOUNT OF PAYMENT (\$) 75.00**Complete if Known:**Application No. Not Yet AssignedFiling Date HerewithFirst Named Inventor Dan KikinisGroup Art Unit Not Yet AssignedExaminer Name Not Yet AssignedAttorney Docket No. 004688.P071Z**METHOD OF PAYMENT (check one)**

1. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge indicated fees and credit any over payments to:

Deposit Account Number 02-2666

Deposit Account Name _____

 Charge Any Additional Fee Required Under 37 CFR 1.16 and 1.17 Applicant claims small entity status. See 37 CFR 1.27

2. Payment Enclosed: Check
 Credit Card
 Money Order
 Other

FEE CALCULATION**1. BASIC FILING FEE**

Large Entity		Small Entity		Fee Description	Fee Paid
Code	Fee (\$)	Code	Fee (\$)		
101	710	201	355	Utility application filing fee	_____
106	320	206	160	Design application filing fee	_____
107	490	207	245	Plant filing fee	_____
108	710	208	355	Reissue filing fee	_____
114	150	214	75	Provisional application filing fee	<u>75.00</u>
SUBTOTAL (1)					<u>\$ 75.00</u>

2. EXTRA CLAIM FEES

	Extra Claims	Fee from below	Fee Paid
Total Claims _____	- 20** = _____	X <u>18.00</u> = _____	
Independent Claims _____	- 3** = _____	X <u>80.00</u> = _____	
Multiple Dependent _____		_____ = _____	

**Or number previously paid, if greater; For Reissues, see below.

Large Entity		Small Entity		Fee Description
Code	Fee (\$)	Code	Fee (\$)	
103	18	203	9	Claims in excess of 20
102	80	202	40	Independent claims in excess of 3
104	270	204	135	Multiple dependent claim, if not paid
109	80	209	40	**Reissue independent claims over original patent
110	18	210	9	**Reissue claims in excess of 20 and over original patent

SUBTOTAL (2) \$ 0

FORM 2001-01-01

FEE CALCULATION (continued)

3. ADDITIONAL FEES

Large Entity		Small Entity		Fee Description	Fee Paid
Fee Code	Fee (\$)	Fee Code	Fee (\$)		
105	130	205	65	Surcharge - late filing fee or oath	_____
127	50	227	25	Surcharge - late provisional filing fee or cover sheet	_____
139	130	139	130	Non-English specification	_____
147	2,520	147	2,520	For filing a request for ex parte reexamination	_____
112	920*	112	920*	Requesting publication of SIR prior to Examiner action	_____
113	1,840*	113	1,840*	Requesting publication of SIR after Examiner action	_____
115	110	215	55	Extension for reply within first month	_____
116	390	216	195	Extension for reply within second month	_____
117	890	217	445	Extension for reply within third month	_____
118	1,390	218	695	Extension for reply within fourth month	_____
128	1,890	228	945	Extension for reply within fifth month	_____
119	310	219	155	Notice of Appeal	_____
120	310	220	155	Filing a brief in support of an appeal	_____
121	270	221	135	Request for oral hearing	_____
138	1,510	138	1,510	Petition to institute a public use proceeding	_____
140	110	240	55	Petition to revive - unavoidable	_____
141	1,240	241	620	Petition to revive - unintentional	_____
142	1,240	242	620	Utility issue fee (or reissue)	_____
143	440	243	220	Design issue fee	_____
144	600	244	300	Plant issue fee	_____
122	130	122	130	Petitions to the Commissioner	_____
123	50	123	50	Processing fee under 37 CFR 1.17(q)	_____
126	180	126	180	Submission of Information Disclosure Stmt	_____
581	40	581	40	Recording each patent assignment per property (times number of properties)	_____
146	710	246	355	For filing a submission after final rejection (see 37 CFR 1.129(a))	_____
149	710	249	355	For each additional invention to be examined (see 37 CFR 1.129(b))	_____
179	710	279	355	Request for Continued Examination (RCE)	_____
169	900	169	900	Request for expedited examination of a design application	_____
195	300	195	300	Publication fee for early, voluntary, or normal publication	_____
196	300	196	300	Publication fee for republication	_____
194	130	194	130	Request for voluntary publication or republication	_____
098	130	098	130	Processing fee under 37 CFR 1.17(i)	_____
091	1,240	091	1,240	Acceptance of unintentionally delayed claim for priority	_____

Other fee (specify) _____

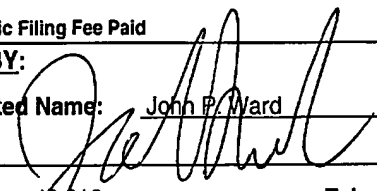
Other fee (specify) _____

SUBTOTAL (3) \$ 0

*Reduced by Basic Filing Fee Paid

SUBMITTED BY:

Typed or Printed Name: John P. Ward

Signature:  Date: 6/25/01

Reg. Number: 40,216 Telephone Number: 408-720-8300

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"PATENT" FORM

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(Signature of person mailing paper or fee)

6/25/01
(Date signed)

RECEIVED "BUSINESS" 6/25/01

Serial/Patent No.: **** Filing/Issue Date: Herewith
Client: iSurfTV
Title: CUSTOMER SELF SERVICE IN INTERACTIVE TV ENVIRONMENT FOR TV PROGRAMMING PACKAGES

BSTZ File No.: 004688.P071Z Atty/Secty Initials: JPW/dkr
Date Mailed: June 25, 2001 Docket Due Date: ****

The following has been received in the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office on the date stamped hereon:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amendment/Response (___ pgs.) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Express Mail No.: <u>EL672753899US</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check No. <u>43749</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal Brief (___ pgs.) (in triplicate) | <input type="checkbox"/> ___ Month(s) Extension of Time Amt: <u>\$75.00</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Application - Utility (___ pgs., with cover and abstract) | <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement & PTO #49 (___ pgs.) <input type="checkbox"/> Check No. ___ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Application - Rule 1.53(b) Continuation (___ pgs.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Issue Fee Transmittal Amt: ___ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Application - Rule 1.53(b) Divisional (___ pgs.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Appeal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Application - Rule 1.53(b) CIP (___ pgs.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Petition for Extension of Time |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Application - Rule 1.53(d) CPA Transmittal (___ pgs.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Petition for ___ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Application - Design (___ pgs.) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postcard |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Application - PCT (___ pgs.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Power of Attorney (___ pgs.) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Application - Provisional (<u>3</u> pgs.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Preliminary Amendment (___ pgs.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assignment and Cover Sheet | <input type="checkbox"/> Reply Brief (___ pgs.) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Certificate of Mailing Express Mail | <input type="checkbox"/> Response to Notice of Missing Parts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Declaration & POA (___ pgs.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Small Entity Declaration for Indep. Inventor/Small Business |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disclose Docs & Cig & Copy of Invention Signed Letter (___ pgs.) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transmittal letter , in duplicate Provisional |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drawings: <u>4</u> # of sheets includes <u>4</u> figures | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fee Transmittal, in duplicate |

Other: _____

Customer Self Service in Interactive TV Environment for TV Programming Packages

Inventor Dan Kikinis, Yakov Kamen, Brian Kimball
iSurfTV 071

Background

In the current art of interactive programming guides (IPGs) for television viewing, when a user receives a set-top box he typically needs to call an 800 number to a call center to have the box activated. Then he typically goes through a process that may include a credit check, and then his set-top box can be activated.

The only exceptions to for this tedious, inconvenient process are add-on services such as WebTV™ and TiVo™, which allow the user to activate their service by himself. However, those systems differ from most television programming provider in that they don't offer a great variety of viewing packages. Instead, such add-on service typically offer only one or two packages, with one or two payment options each.

The reason programming providers such as cable operators and satellite operators prefer to have the customer call into to a call center is that it provides an opportunity to up-sell the client to better, more expensive programming packages, and hence generate more revenue.

What is clearly needed is a system for an automated up-sell process that could interactively query the customer and, based on customer responses, out of the multitude of available packages could then generate suggestions for programming packages designed to appeal to him, thus retaining the advantages for the provider of selling better programming packages to the customer, while avoiding for the customer the inconvenience of having to call into a call center.

Description of the Embodiment

Figure 1 shows a screen 100 that could appear when the user enters the set-up section of an interactive television device, typically a set-top box. Screen 100 has, for example, guided set-up options, such as "Initial Setup," "Move" (to help the customer change service when, for example, when he moves to another address), or "Counsel on New Promotions," which the customer could access if he sees advertisements for new packages and he's interested in learning more about them.

Figure 2 shows a diagram of a process flow 200 for initial set-up. The user enters through arrow 220

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to box 201, where he would enter basic customer data such as name, address, telephone number, credit card number, etc.

In box 202, a dialog would query the user, using, typically, around 5 questions, about his viewing preferences, such as movies, sports, news, etc.

In step 203, out of the vast multitude of available packages and promotions, the system would offer him a comparison of a small selection, maybe three to five, of suitable options that the software has deemed suitable, based on the user's responses in query 202.

The comparisons may be presented as a comparison table, comparing features, with bubbles hailing certain advantages of one package over another. Once those comparisons have been shown, the user then has several options in step 204:

- He can select one package, and can then finalize the set-up in box 210, and exit via arrow 221.
- He can abort the set-up process and exit via arrows 222 and 221. He can repeat it later if, for example, he wants to consult with other family members before finalizing the selection.
- He could move to box 205, where he can access a total overview of all programming options, in possibly several groups on several pages. He could then make a limited selection of packages in various different groups and have those packages presented to him in step 206, in a manner similar to the comparison of packages in step 203. Again, he returns to arrow 223, from where he may repeat the selection of options in step 204.

Figure 3 shows an example of a "Move" process flow 300. The customer enters at arrow 320 to box 301, which displays the customer's account data, including current address, phone number, etc. The user then enters his new address at step 302.

In some cases, the interactive software queries a database in step 303 about services available at the customer's new location. For example, if the customer moves to another town, he may have to return his set-top box or he may have to use another provider to set up his service in the other town. Those kinds of changes may exceed the program capabilities of the local set-top box, and therefore an inquiry into the main database is done.

Based on that inquiry, one of several options may be offered to the user in step 304, such as, in the simplest case, return the box, or move the box, reconnect, and do a new install at the new network, etc.

Presented options may include scheduling technicians for wiring a new location, in case there is no current cable drop or satellite, etc., available at that location.

In step 305 the user chooses from the presented new service options and, for example, schedules the date at which he wants to disconnect the current service and activate the new service. In case technician intervention may be required, the processes of step 305 may require additional interactive communication for scheduling and technician availability.

Figure 4 show a process flow in a case for changing programming. It may be that the customer has, for example, seen a promotion offering a new programming package, or the customer may be prompted through an interactive ad to review his current subscription versus his actual usage pattern.

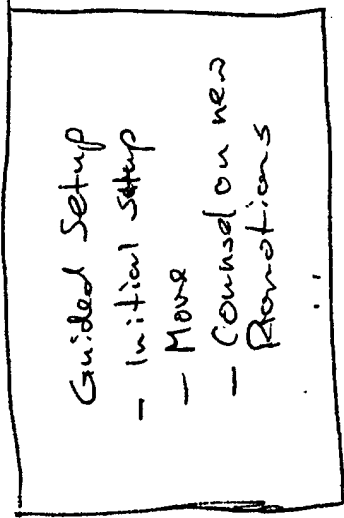
The customer enters the process at arrow 420. In step 401, his historic usage pattern is analyzed. Then in step 402 attempts by the customer to view or record currently unavailable programs are added to that analysis. For example, the customer may have been trying to record programs from HBO, even though he doesn't currently subscribe to HBO.

Based on the customer's history of program viewing and attempts to view programs, the system then makes a recommendation of packages in step 403. The process would then continue as in Figure 2, step 223.

It is clear that many variations can be made to the details of the system. Step may be modified by individual providers to suit their product and market, and additional steps may be inserted or certain steps may be sometimes left out. All such modifications, additions and deletion may be made without departing from the spirit of the invention.

TELEVISION "RESEARCH" CORPORATION

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Fig. 1

FOR "ABOUT" SCREEN

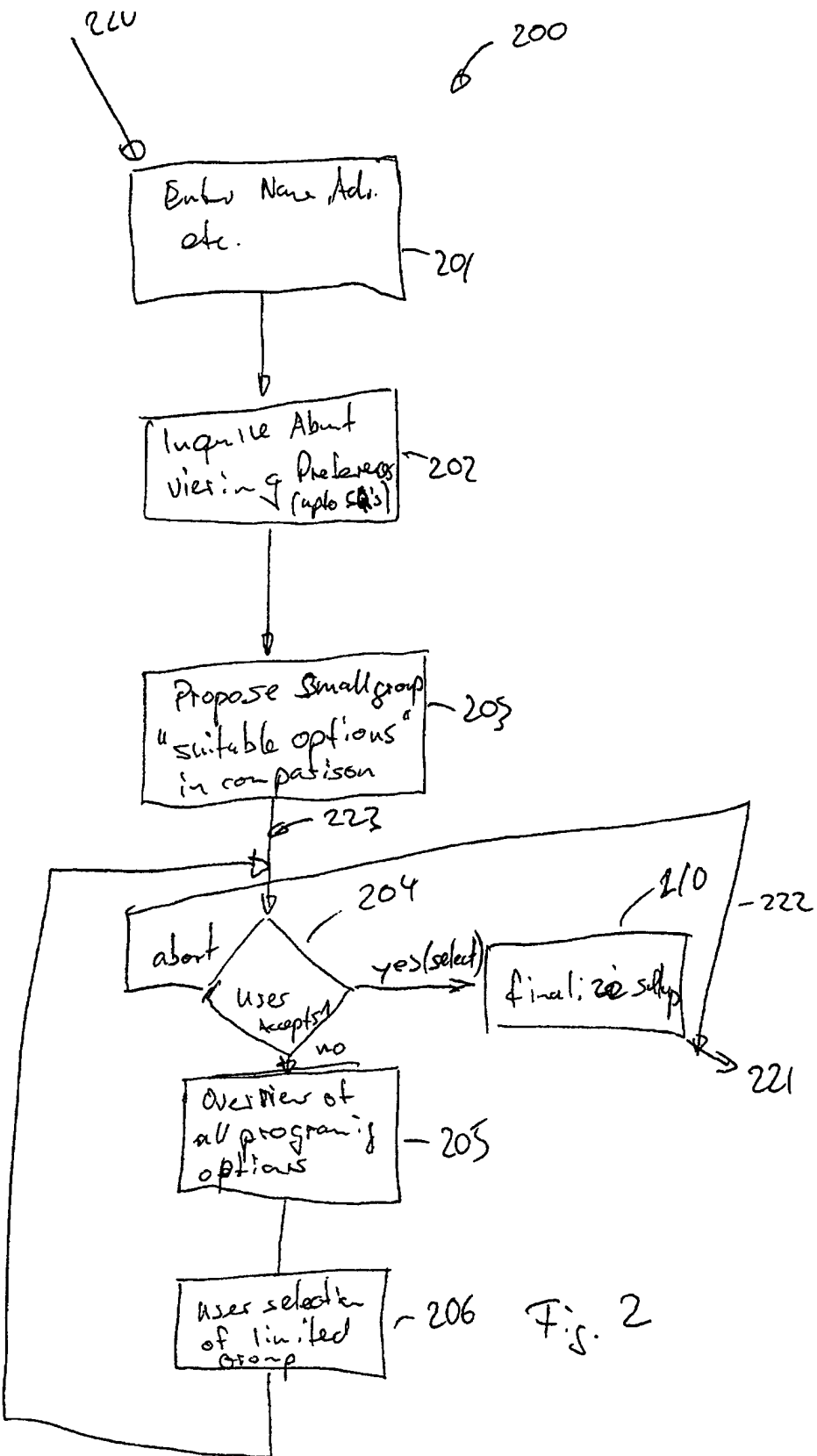


Fig. 2

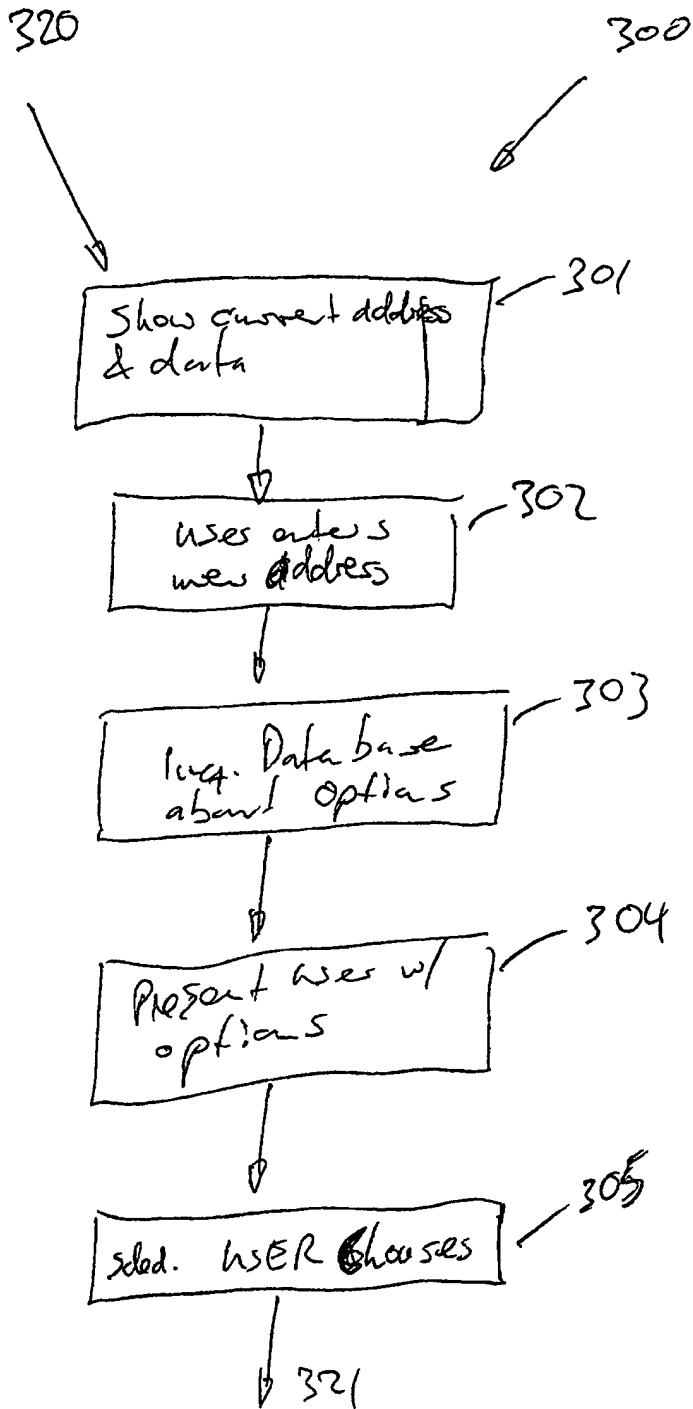


Fig. 3

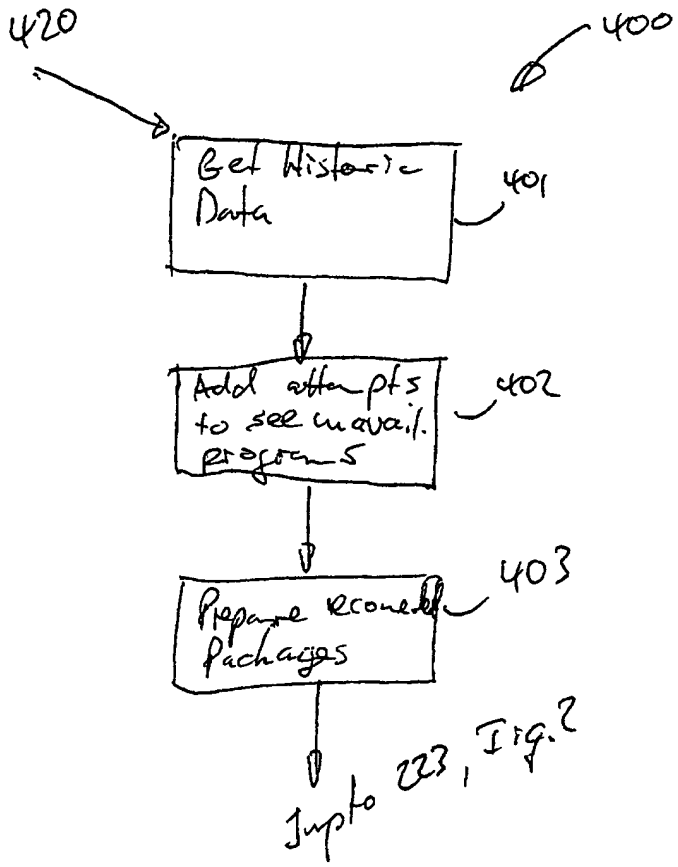


Fig. 4